

SEVEN RIVERS RECORD

Newsletter of the Chickasaw County Conservation Board - Conserving our natural resources since 1957 Summer 2023

Director's Dialogue Director, Chad Humpal

N. J. KOENIGSFELD WILDLIFE AREA ACQUISITION



Norbert and Loretta Koenigsfeld approached the Chickasaw County Conservation Board back in late 2018 about acquiring a parcel of land. The original discussion was looking at the far west 80 acres of their property. After some discussion and a couple phone calls, The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation was brought on board. An incredible group of individuals from INHF lead by Ross Baxter went to work doing what they do; protecting and preserving our natural areas for future generations.

The local NRCS staff was able to establish a wetland reserve easement on 135 acres of the Koenigsfeld property. Along with the easement, they were able to secure funding to establish 2 shallow wetlands, along with some fence and brush removal for the property.

Fast-forward through a global pandemic, many emails, phone calls and many hours spent on protecting this parcel of land to March of 2022. It is at this time the INHF is able to close on the entire 205 acres of the Koenigsfeld property.

While INHF worked on securing the property, it was their goal to then transfer the property to the Chickasaw County Conservation Board so that they could manage the property into the future. The property was appraised at \$585,100. After the Koenigsfeld generous bargain sale, some added expenses like taxes, closing costs, appraisal and interest, the total purchase price for the Chickasaw County Conservation Board was \$422,682.27. That's a pretty healthy price tag for a department that has a total budget of \$430,000.

Continued on Page 2...

INSIDE THIS ISSUE	
Twin Ponds 20th Anniversary Celebration	Page 3
Upcoming Events	Page 4
Creature Feature	Page 6
New Face in the Parks	Page 7

Director's Dialogue by Chad Humpal

Chickasaw County Pioneer Pheasants Forever was quick to get after the fundraising effort to secure this property for CCCB. Chickasaw County Pioneer Pheasants Forever donated the first \$40,000 to the project and then reached out to their fellow PF Chapters in the surrounding counties, many of those Chapters Chickasaw Pioneer Pheasants had helped in the past with land aquations of their own. It wasn't long and they were getting donations from other chapters. By the time they were done they had received money from Floyd, Mitchell, Fayette, Howard, North Butler, South Butler, Upper Iowa and Cerro Gordo County Chapters. The National Wild Turkey Federation, Whitetails Unlimited, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, an Anonymous Donor and Chickasaw County REAP all donated towards

the purchase of the property. The final payment for the property was secured when the Chickasaw County Conservation Board was awarded the Wildlife Habitat Stamp Grant. In the end no local tax dollars were used to purchase this property.

In June of 2023 the Chickasaw County Conservation Board was able to purchase the property from INHF. Norbert and Loretta's legacy and the property they loved will now be managed by CCCB for all to share and enjoy. None of this would have happened without an incredible group of organizations and individuals coming together. Thank you all for your time and financial assistance.

Property location

1766 220th St New Hampton, IA 50659. 2 miles east of Ionia and 4 miles west of New Hampton on Hwy B57.

Project Site Description

The 205-acre property is comprised of 130 acres of wetland, 40 acres enrolled in CRP, and 35 acres of riparian woodland including many Red Oak, White Oak, Black Walnut, and silver maple. Approximately 80 acres of restored prairie lie within the Wetland Reserve Easement acres.

Future Management Plans

Two wetlands are currently being constructed on the south end of the property along with fence and brush removal. These efforts are being facilitated by the NRCS and their Wetland Reserve Easement program, along with CCCB staff.

Chickasaw County Conservation Board (CCCB) plans to continue the land management practices the Koenigsfelds have been using for decades. CCCB will engage in regular brush removal and prescribed burns to maintain the quality of the prairie ecosystem. CCCB also hopes to introduce new native plant species to the tallgrass prairie habitat to increase species diversity. This property will be open to the public for year-round hunting. The property's diverse habitat offerings support game species such as deer, turkey, quail, pheasant, and duck. CCCB plans to maintain a mowed path around the property to make it easier for hunters, birders, and other outdoor enthusiasts to access and navigate the property.

FUNDING BREAKDOWN	
Koenigsfeld Family Donated Value	\$185,100.00
REAP	\$36,684.27
CCCB left from farm rent	\$13,708.00
Chickasaw County Pheasants Forever	\$40,000.00
Floyd County Pheasants Forever	\$5,000.00
Mitchell County Pheasants Forever	\$5,000.00
Fayette County Pheasants Forever	\$10,000.00
Howard County Pheasants Forever	\$10,000.00
North Butler County Pheasants Forever	\$5,000.00
South Butler County Pheasants Forever	\$2,000.00
Upper Iowa Chapter Pheasants Forever	\$1,500.00
Cerro Gordo Chapter Pheasant Forever	\$1,000.00
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers	\$1,000.00
Anonymous Donor	\$5,290.00
Whitetails Unlimited - National	\$5,000.00
National Wild Turkey Federation	\$5,000.00
Habitat Stamp	\$276,500.00

Visit mycountyparks.com to check out what is going on with Chickasaw County Conservation as well as other county conservation throughout the state of Iowa.



TWIN PONDS 20th!!!

Come celebrate the Twin Ponds Nature Center's 20th



Anniversary on Sunday September



10th from 1-4 pm

Enjoy Fun Outdoor activities such as archery, sling-shots, kayaking, crafts, and we will also have special guest speaker Linette Bernard from SOAR, *Saving Our Avian Resources*. Linette will be bringing a couple of birds of prey, that may include animals such as a red-tailed hawk and a screech owl. She will present at 2:00 and 3:00 pm.



Nature Center News & Events

Chickasaw/Bremer Float on the Cedar River

Thursday, August 3 10:00 AM start time

Want to go on a great river float with naturalists from 2 counties? This is your opportunity. Join Matt and a Bremer County Naturalist, or two, to float from Pearl Rock to North Cedar Park. We have a limited number of kayaks available, so it is important to call ahead of time to register: 641-394-4714. (You're welcome to float your own boat, just let us know that you plan on coming!) All participants are required to wear a life jacket throughout the trip.

Hunter Education Classes

August 4,5 @ Nashua Fish and Game Club

September 7,9 @ Fredericksburg Sportsman's Club

There will be 2 Hunter Education classes coming up here shortly. These are full classroom courses and participants must attend the entirety of both sessions. Online Registration with the Iowa DNR is required by going to <https://license.gooutdoorsiowa.com/Event/EventsHome.aspx>.

If you have questions, feel free to call us at 641-394-4714.

Twin Ponds 20th Anniversary Fun Day!

Sunday September 10 1:00-4:00

Come out to Twin Ponds for a day of fun in celebration of the Nature Center's 20th Anniversary. We will have a number of activities including crafts, archery, kayaking and a special guest speaker that will be bringing a couple of birds of prey with her. This will be a fun day not to forget! All are welcome to attend.

Halloween Hike

Tuesday, October 10 6:00, 6:15, 6:30 and 6:45

@ Twin Ponds

This might be our favorite annual fall event. Every October, the naturalists of Chickasaw, Butler and Bremer CCBs get together to have a fun, educational hike for elementary aged kids to enjoy. With the help of volunteers we are able to provide snacks and guides for the hikes. There are 4 different hike times and pre-registration is required by calling 641-394-4714. Space will be limited, so make sure that you don't wait until the last day to sign up!

TWIN PONDS NATURE CENTER

1811 240TH ST - IONIA

641-394-4714

Public Hours

Monday - Friday Noon - 4:30 p.m.

Closed for Holidays.

You may also call for an appointment if those times don't work for you.

Nature Center Wish List

- Medium-sized Fishing Bobbers
- Any used canoes or kayaks in decent shape, or paddles
- Fly fishing rods/reels, cross-country skis, snowshoes
- Birdseed

These items are used for the nature center, school programs, scout programs, and other public programs. We appreciate any and all support.



Check out mycountyparks.com for great information and mapping for all of the public areas managed by Chickasaw CCB as well as anywhere else that you travel in the state.

- **THANK YOU:** Randy Leach for the donation of a canoe.
- **THANK YOU:** Chickasaw Pioneer Chapter of Pheasants Forever for their sizable donation and the coordination of donations from other chapters in the area for the purchase of wildlife habitat for the public's use.
- **THANK YOU:** The Myrsiades family for donating bird seed.
- **THANK YOU:** Marc Waterlander and Patrick Dirks and everyone else that helped with field trip season.
- **THANK YOU:** Kellogg's Honey for supplying and maintaining the Twin Ponds bees.
- **THANK YOU:** Tina Rowe and Shelly Tanner and Brian Wurzer for all of the work they do as our campground hosts.

Upcoming Events

Dutch Oven Cook-off

Airport Lake Park Campground

Sponsored by the Friends of CCC

Saturday, September 30: Sign in at 10 am

Want to see how good of a Dutch Oven cook you are? Join us at the Airport Lake Park campground for a Dutch Oven cook-off. Each participant will create one dish to be tasted by judges. Registration for the event is \$10. Registered campers will not be required to pay the registration fee. There will be a discounted registration for scouts. Registration is required by calling 641-394-4714. Space is limited. Sign-in at 10 am. Dishes to be served between 11:30 and 12:30.



Lending Library at Airport Lake Campground

Keep an eye out for a new lending library at the Airport Lake Park campground. This is thanks to our campground host Tina Rowe. **THANKS TINA!**



Creature Feature by Matt Crayne, Naturalist

Eastern Cottontail Rabbit

Sylvilagus floridanus

The eastern cottontail rabbit is one of the most seen mammals in Iowa. Whether you've grown up in town or in the country, there's no doubt that you've seen them. Heck, there's even a good chance that you've stumbled across one of their 'nests'.

The eastern cottontail is considered a medium-sized mammal. The obvious identifying characteristic, that stands out to most people, are their large, long ears. Cottontails have hind feet that are much larger/ longer than their front feet, and have a short, fluffy tail. Like all of the hares/rabbits, they have an upper lip

that is divided. The coloration of the cottontail can vary a bit from reddish to grayish brown, with the exception of that white tail that looks like someone stuck a cotton ball on its backside, hence the name cottontail rabbit. They molt in the fall and in the spring/summer. According to the book Wild Mammals of Missouri, the molt in the spring/summer is more of a replacement in smaller spots, as opposed to the fall molt where the hair is replaced in larger areas, or "sheets." The jackrabbit is the only other rabbit found in Iowa, but it no longer lives in this area and is noticeably larger in size.

Cottontail rabbits can be found in a number of different habitat types. Usually, they prefer the forest edge, or an area that goes from grassland to woodland. In town, they can often be found where there are bushy or shrubby areas next to open areas. They often stay near cover so that they have a safe place to take refuge. Those safe places may be under bushes and shrubs, in the burrows of other animals, or maybe even underneath a man-made structure, such as a shed or a cement set of stairs.

As far as reproduction goes, the female will dig a slight depression in the ground of a pasture, field, fencerow, or yard (or other) that is about 6-7 inches long, 5 inches wide, and 3-4 inches deep. This is usually lined with grasses and fur from the mother (Wild Mammals of Missouri). She will make sure to place this in a well-drained area.

Depending on the amount of snow cover, breeding usually begins in late-winter. Females will continue to reproduce throughout the warm season. It has been recorded that they may have up to 8 litters! (This is not typical.) While litters can be as large as 9 offspring, they usually average around 4-5. During peak breeding season, the female may be both pregnant and nursing young. Gestation is about 4 weeks. At birth, the young are basically hairless, with their eyes and ears closed. After about a week, they will be furred and can see and hear. They will leave the nest in 2-3 weeks following birth and females may breed in their first year.

The cottontail rabbit is an important food source for a number of predators including people, coyotes, bobcats and raptors. Their diet consists of grasses and other greenery. In the winter they will feed on other things such as waste grains, woody vegetation, and more. They may eat their own soft droppings to regain more nutrients from vegetation that was not fully processed.



Nature Center Volunteers

If you enjoy visiting the Twin Ponds Nature Center and would like to make it available to others that aren't able to visit during our normal hours, consider becoming a Sunday nature center host. We are trying to have the nature center open for the first Sunday of the month from 1-4 pm. and are always looking for more volunteers. If you are interested in hosting, please contact us at 641-394-4714, or at m.crayne@chickasawcounty.iowa.gov.

New Face in the Parks

I'm Marc Vorwald. After attending New Hampton High School, I continued my education at Upper Iowa University in the field of environmental sciences. I'm grateful for the opportunity to join the Chickasaw County Conservation team for the summer.



Newsletter Option

Here in the electronic age, Chickasaw County Conservation is trying to keep moving forward. For the upcoming newsletter, you have the option of getting the newsletter sent to you electronically.

If you are interested in receiving the newsletter electronically, please send an email to m.crayne@chickasawcounty.iowa.gov including the following:

Name
Mailing Address
Email address
Phone Number



SEVEN RIVERS RECORD

1811 240th Street • Ionia, Iowa 50645

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE

PAID

NEW HAMPTON
IA



Board Members

Lori Carey	New Hampton
Mike Pickar	New Hampton
Ray Armbrecht	Fredericksburg
JoAnn Myrsiades	Alta Vista
Jim Allison	Ionia

Staff

Chad Humpal	Director
Matt Crayne	Naturalist
Caleb Ciavarelli & Justin Van Driel	NR & Park Managers



**This newsletter is printed on
recycled paper.**

Board Meetings

Conservation Board meetings are open to the public. Visitors are welcome to attend. Meetings are held the first Monday of the month at the Conservation Headquarters located in Twin Ponds Nature Center at 1811 240th St, Ionia. Watch the Chickasaw CCB website for notice of the monthly meeting, the agenda and a start time. Please note that meetings may be scheduled for dates other than the first Monday. Changes are noted on the website. For more information, call Chickasaw County Conservation at 641-394-4714.

Nature Center Hours

Monday - Friday Noon - 4:30 p.m.

Or by Appointment - Closed for Holidays.

www.mycountyparks.com or <https://chickasawcounty.iowa.gov/conservation/>

The CCCB does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or handicap.

Mailing List

If you would like to be receive the newsletter or need to change your address, call the County Conservation office at

641-394-4714 or email: m.crayne@chickasawcounty.iowa.gov

You will receive the newsletter at no cost.

Donations to FCCC to cover costs for printing and postage are welcome.